

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 252341Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7169

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMCONGEN BELIZE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 3283

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GT

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN ELECTED

1. SUMMARY: ALL OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES RECEIVED CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS IN JUNE 24 ELECTIONS IN CONGRESS. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN FORMULATING THIS NOVEL COALITION. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES RECEIVED COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS DURING THE JUNE 24 BALLOTING IN CONGRESS. CAO AND MLN EACH RECEIVED TWO CHAIRMANSHIPS, WHILE PR, DCG, AND PID RECEIVED THREE EACH. THE SECRETARY GENERALS OF BOTH THE OPPOSITION PARTIES RECEIVED CHAIRMANSHIPS, ALTHOUGH THE COMMITTEES WERE MINOR ONES.

3. OTHER OPPOSITION CONGRESSMEN DID RECEIVE IMPORTANT COMMITTEES: FINANCE (PR), AGRICULTURE (DCG), AND COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC WORKS (DCG). JORGE GARCIA-GRANADOS WILL HEAD FINANCE. ROBERTO CARPIO NICOLLE, WHO

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IN LAST SESSION LOBBIED FOR A TAX ON BANANA EXPORTS, WILL

CHAIR AGRICULTURE.

4. THE MLN RECEIVED ONLY TWO SECOND-RUNG COMMITTEES, INTERIOR AND LABOR. MLN VOTED AGAINST GIVING CHAIRMANSHIPS TO MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION.

5. TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEES REFLECTS INCREASED ROLE OF OPPOSITION PARTIES. DURING PAST SESSION OPPOSITION MEMBERS HELD ONLY 15 OF 91 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS, BUT THEY NOW HAVE 31 OF 85 (WITH THE MEMBERS OF ONE COMMITTEE YET TO BE NAMED).

6. COMMENT: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS HAS CREATED NOVEL POLITICAL SITUATION FOR GUATEMALA IN WHICH ALL LEGALLY-INSCRIBED PARTIES HAVE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN CONGRESS. ARCHITECT OF THIS POLITICAL EDIFICE IS PRESIDENT LAUGERUD, WHO GAVE FINAL APPROVAL TO LIST OF CHAIRMANSHIPS. LAUGERUD'S ACTIONS HAVE REINFORCED INSTINCTIVE PROPENSITY OF GUATEMALANS TO LIK TO THE PRESIDENT FOR FINAL DECISIONS ON MAJOR ISSUES. AT SAME TIME LAUGERUD HAS CREATED A SITUATION IN WHICH ALL OF THE PARTIES WILL NEED TO MAINTAIN CONSTANT COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THE PRESIDENT. WE BELIEVE THAT LAUGERUD'S POLITICAL POSITION HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED AND HIS CONFIDENCE IN HIS OWN ABILITIES AS A POLITICAL LEADER FURTHER INCREASED.

7. MLN HAS SEEN ITS POWER RECEDE. IT WAS NOT GIVEN ANY IMPORTANT COMMITTEE POSITIONS, AND WE HAVE THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT THE MLN WAS TOLD TO "TAKE-IT-OR-LEAVE-IT." ANOTHER REASON FOR MLN UNHAPPINESS IS THAT INCLUSION OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS ON ALL THE COMMITTEES WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR BILLS TO BE BURIED OR MANIPULATED IN PRIVATE, A MLN SPECIALITY DURING LAST FIVE YEARS. END COMMENT.
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